

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF **SIERRA LEONE**

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Sierra Leone's mineral production remained restricted by civil unrest during most of 1997. The fighting resulted in the suspension of most mineral operations in the country. The mineral industry had accounted for 15% to 20% of the nation's gross domestic product, 80% to 90% of export earnings, and employed almost 15% of the labor force, primarily in rural areas.

Sierra Leone has additional mineral deposits, including bauxite,

cassiterite, clays, columbite, diamond, gold, iron ore, kaolin, lignite, platinum, dimension stone, and tantalite (Jeremy Hawke, IMC Mackay and Schnellmann, unpub. data, 1997). For more-extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Sierra Leone, see the 1996 Minerals Yearbook, Volume III, Mineral Industries of Africa and the Middle East.

TABLE 1
SIERRA LEONE: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/

(Thousand metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Bauxite, gross weight	1,170	735	--	--	--
Diamond thousand carats	158	255	214	270	104
Gold 2/ kilograms	157	125	4	16	10
Gypsum e/ metric tons	4,000	4,000	100	300	150
Salt e/	200	200	--	50	10
Titanium:					
Rutile ore and concentrate 96% TiO ₂ , gross weight	152	137	--	--	--
Ilmenite ore and concentrate 60% TiO ₂ , gross weight	63	47	--	--	--
Zircon metric tons	--	1,300	--	--	--

e/ Estimated.

1/ Table includes data available through August 14, 1998.

2/ Data includes only officially reported production.